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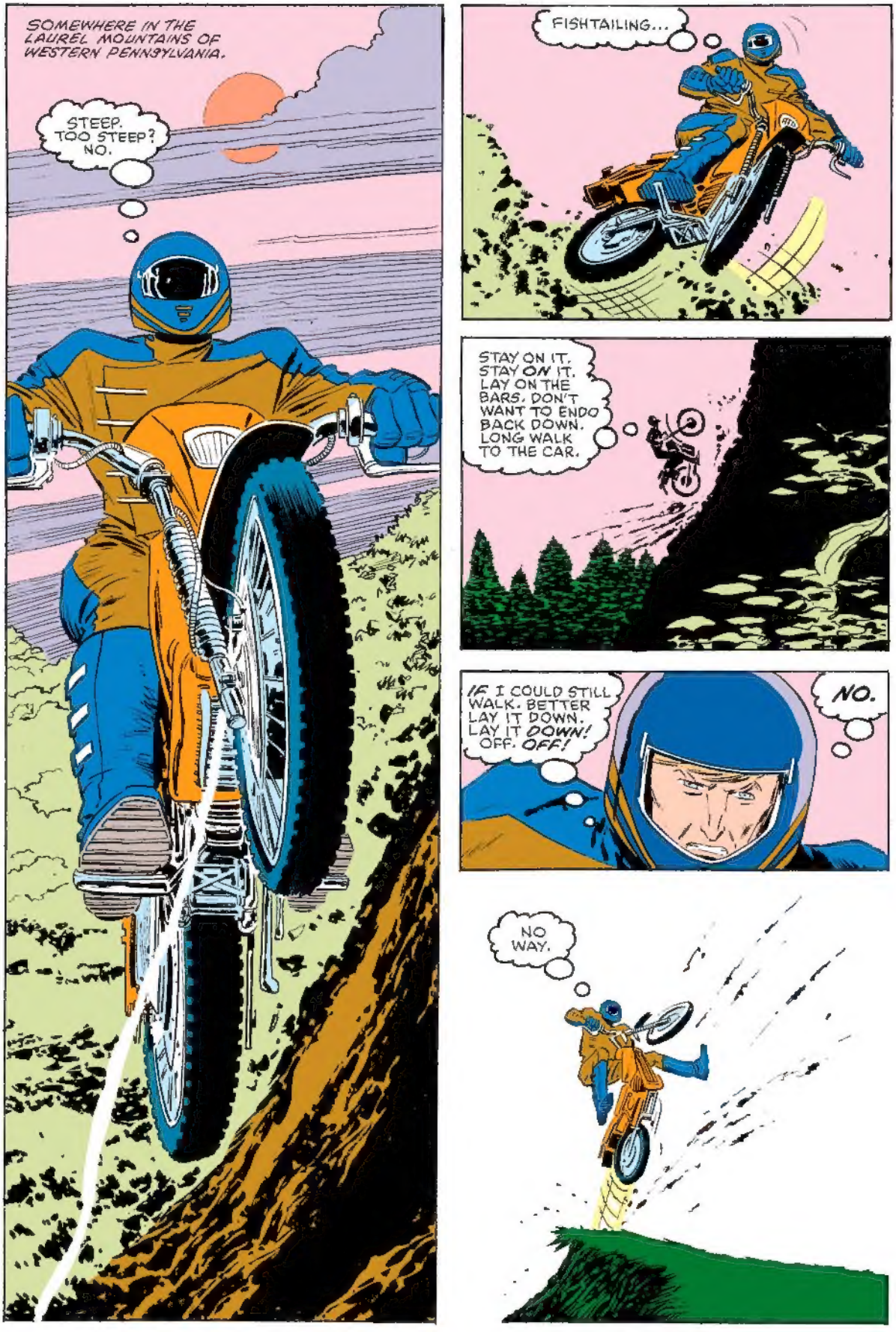
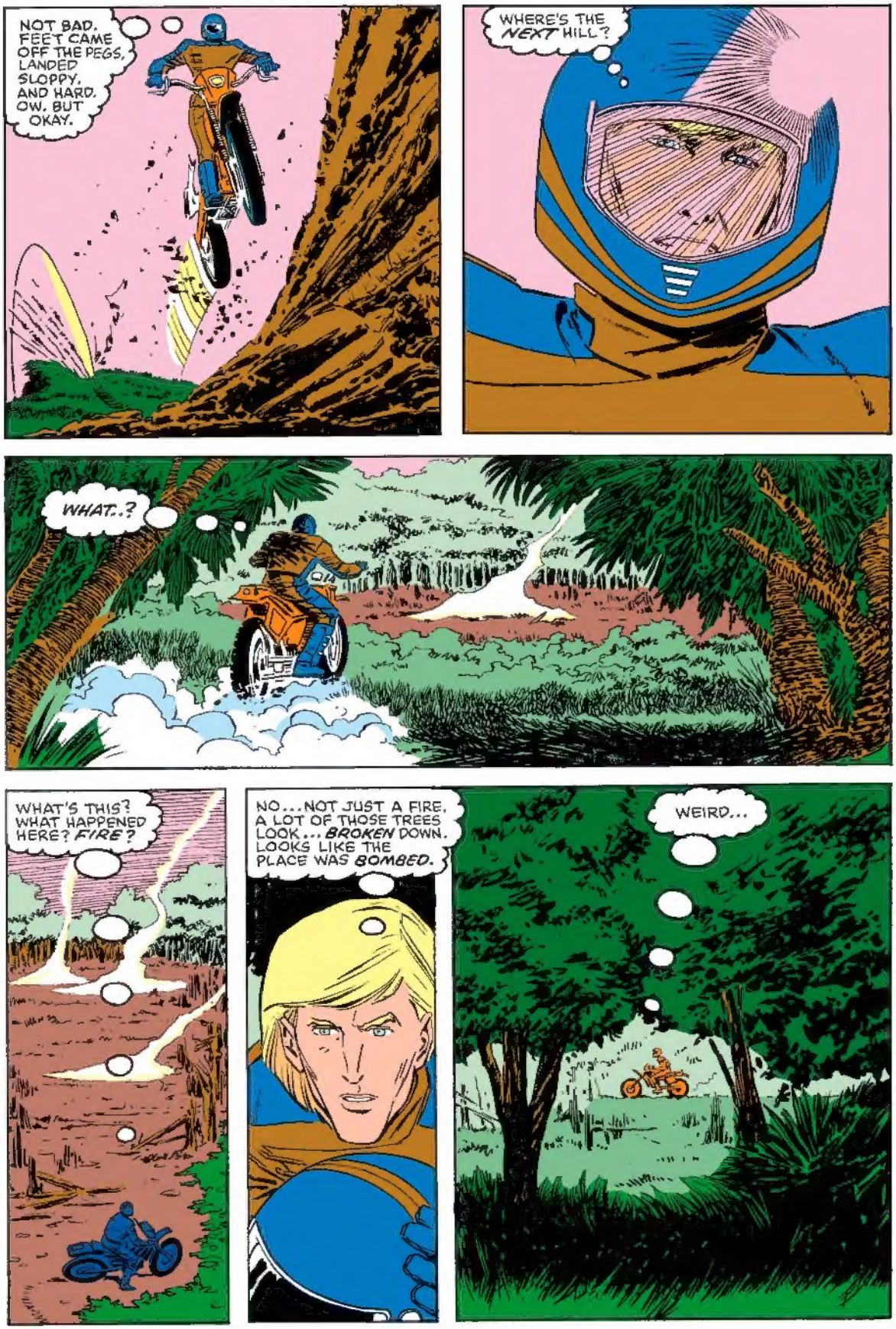
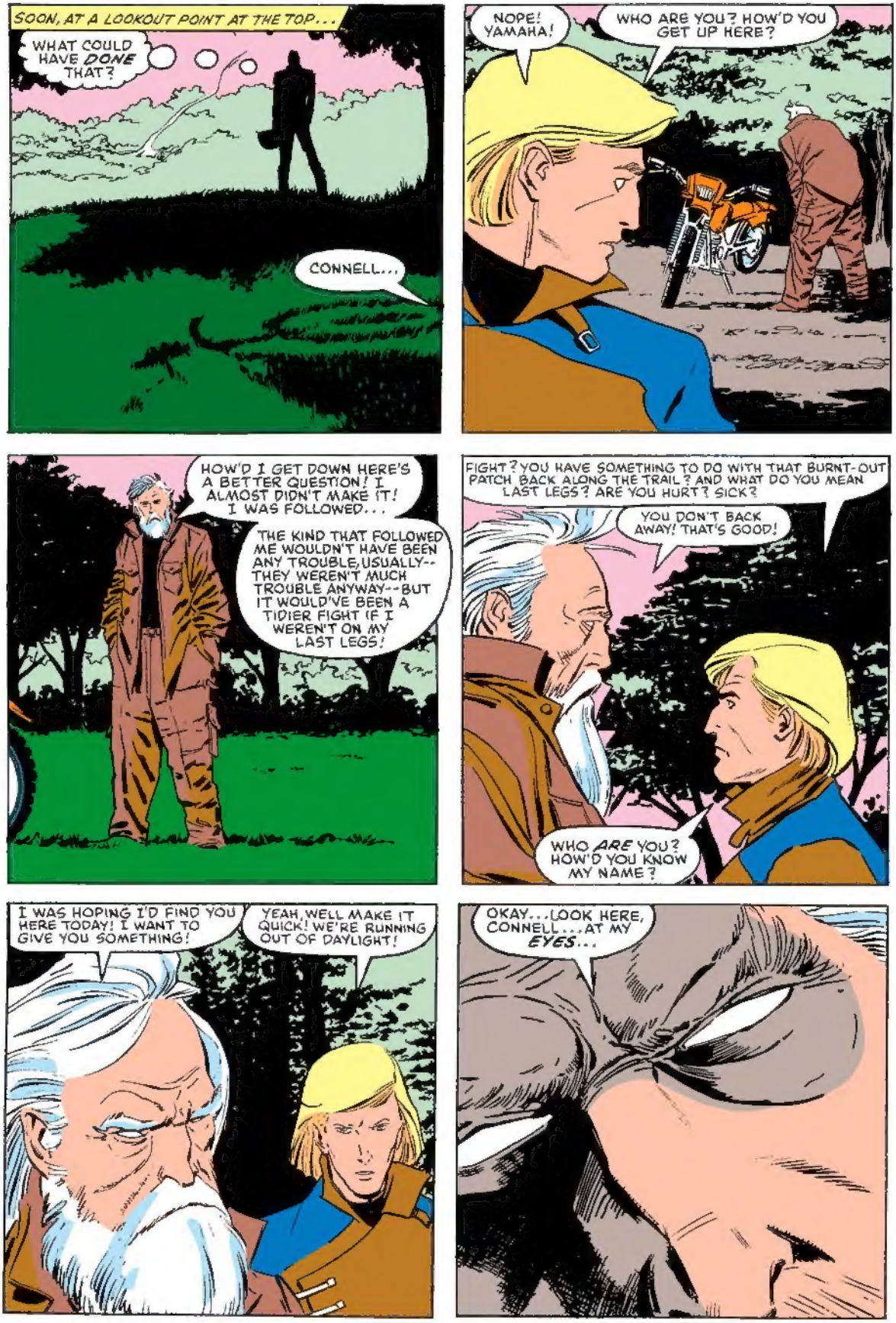
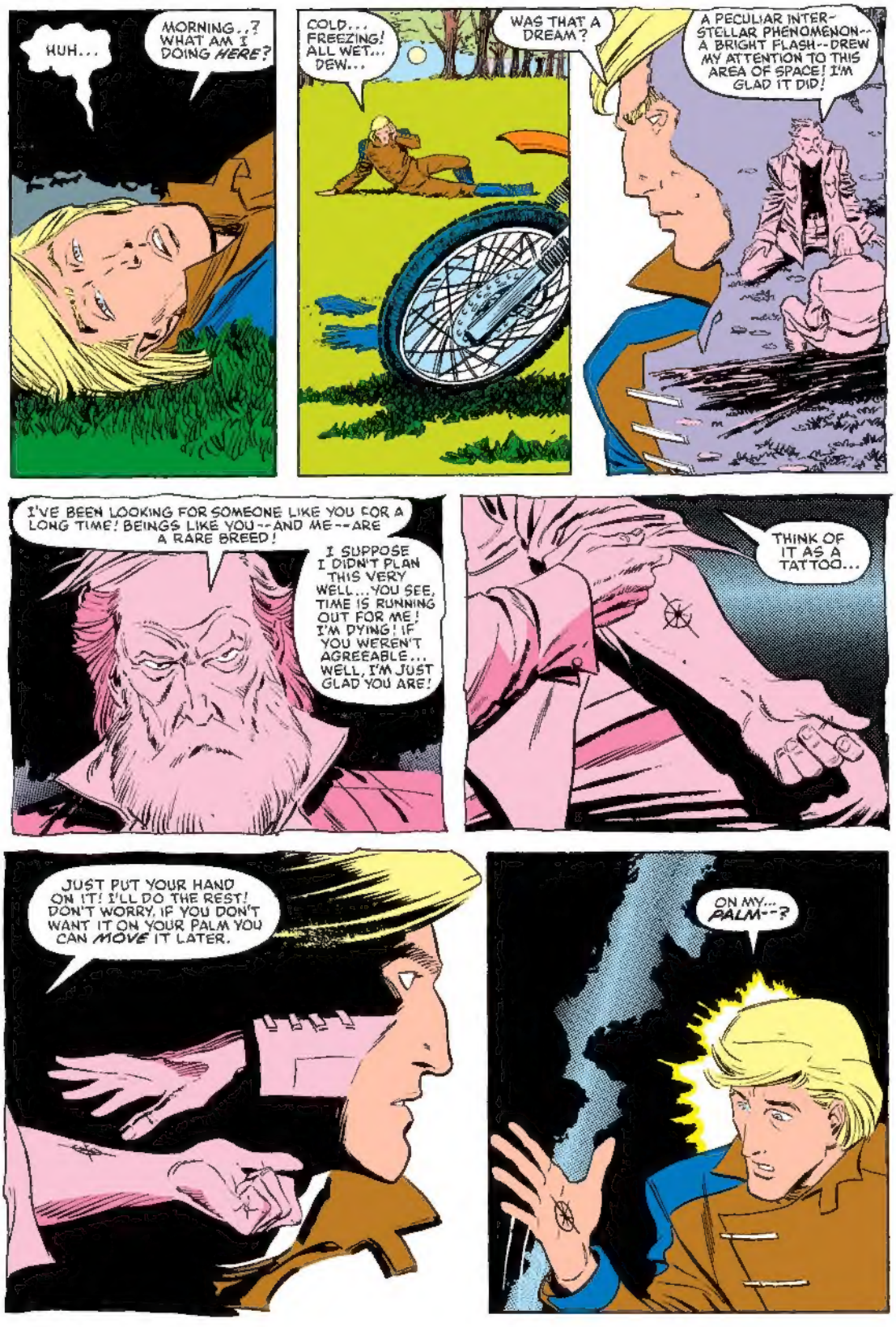
new universe™
STAR BRAND™

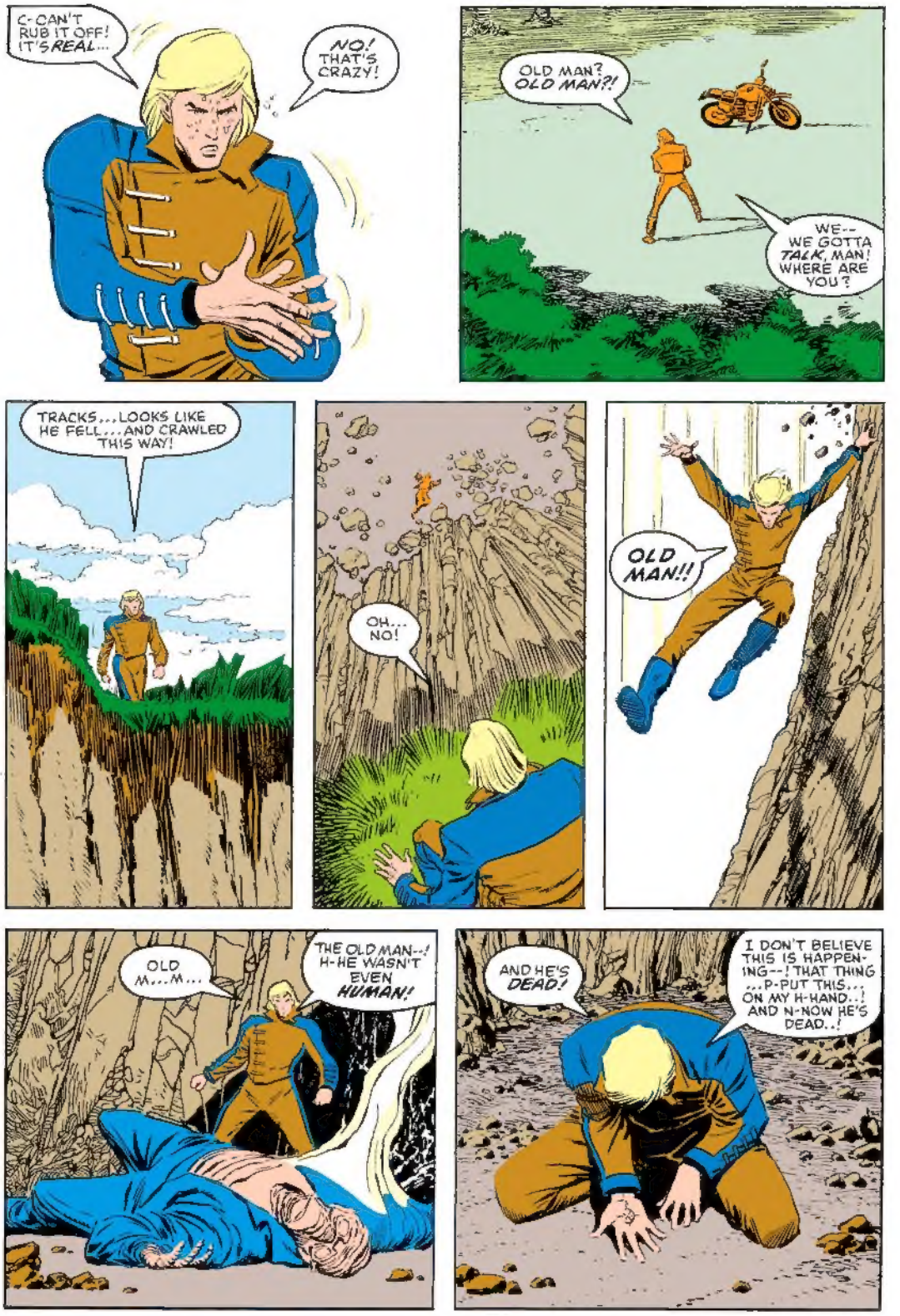
THERE IS A WEAPON IN THE UNIVERSE MORE POWERFUL THAN ALL OTHERS. NO MORE COVETED, FEARED, LOVED, OR HATED THING EXISTS. ONLY A FOOL, OR A MADMAN--OR THE RIGHT MAN--WOULD DARE POSSESS...
THE STAR BRAND
703
NORTHERN ATLANTIC
JIM SHOOTER
SCRIPTER
JOHN ROMITA JR.
PENCILER
AL WILLIAMSON
INKER
JOE ROSEN
LETTERER
CHRISTIE SCHEELE
COLORIST
MICHAEL HIGGINS
EDITOR

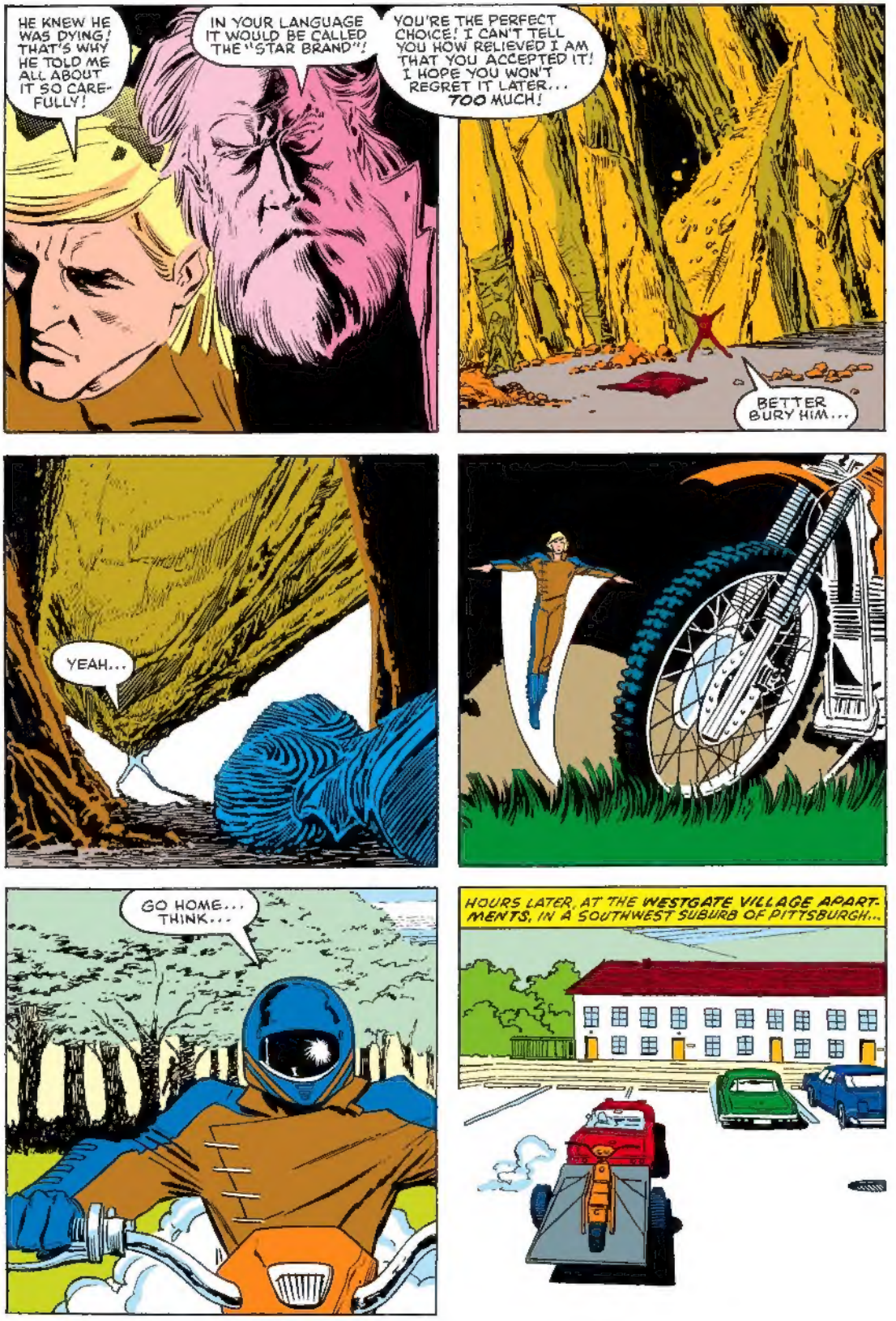

SOMEWHERE IN THE LAUREL MOUNTAINS OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA.
STEEP. TOO STEEP? NO.
FISHTAILING...
STAY ON IT. STAY ON IT. LAY ON THE BARS. DON'T WANT TO ENDO BACK DOWN. LONG WALK TO THE CAR.
IF I COULD STILL WALK. BETTER LAY IT DOWN. LAY IT DOWN! OFF. OFF!
NO.
NO WAY.

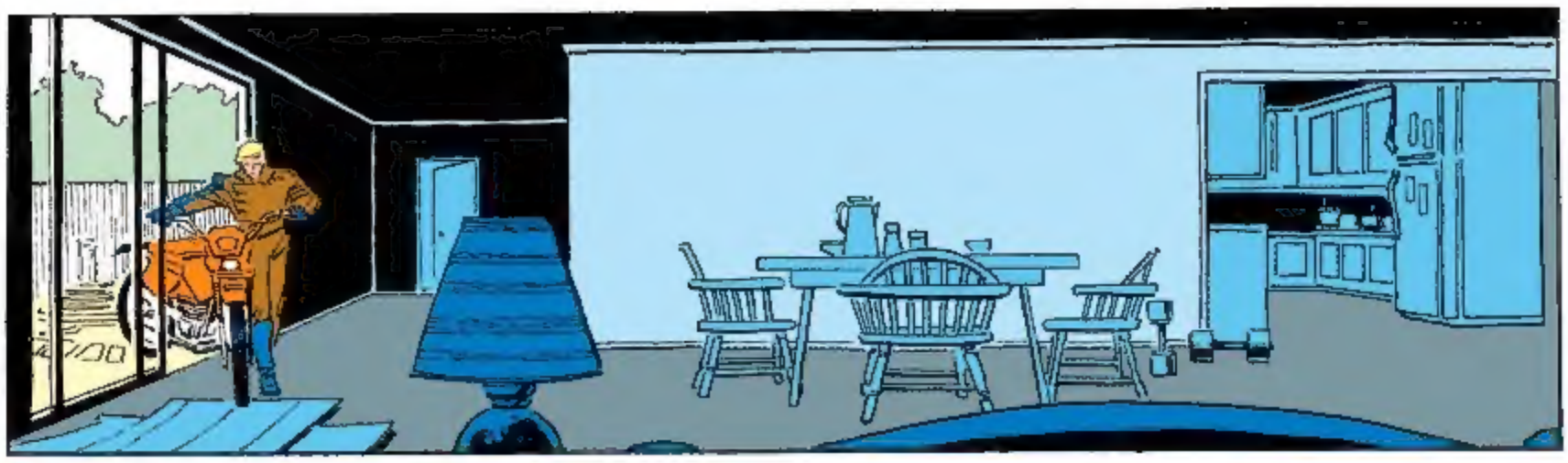

NOT BAD. FEET CAME OFF THE PEGS, LANDED SLOPPY, AND HARD. OW. BUT OKAY.
WHERE'S THE NEXT HILL?
WHAT..?
WHAT'S THIS? WHAT HAPPENED HERE? FIRE?
NO...NOT JUST A FIRE. A LOT OF THOSE TREES LOOK... BROKEN DOWN. LOOKS LIKE THE PLACE WAS BOMBED.
WEIRD...

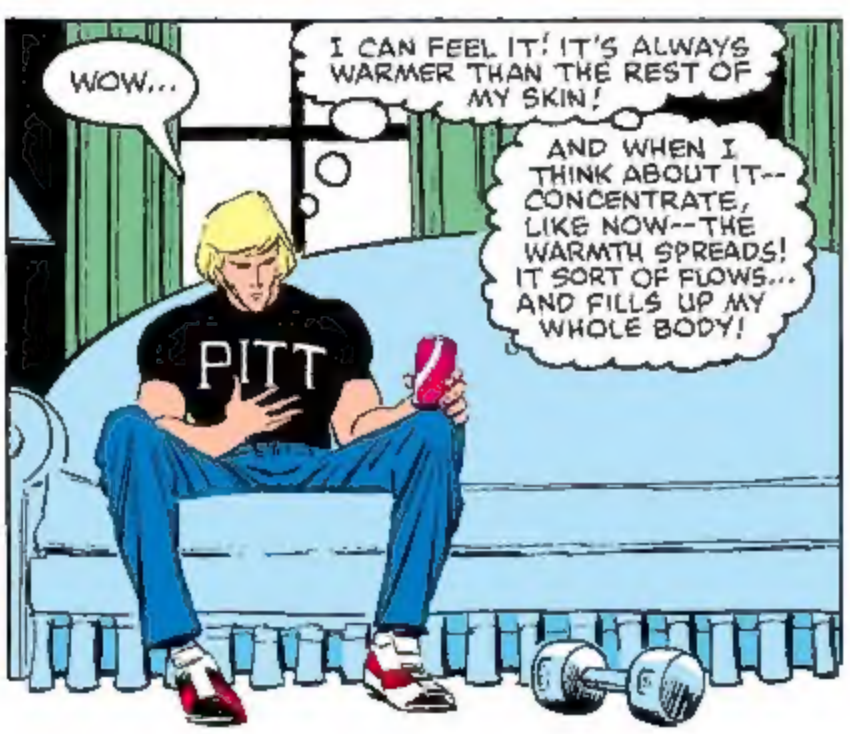

SOON, AT A LOOKOUT POINT AT THE TOP...
WHAT COULD HAVE DONE THAT?
CONNELL...
NOPE! YAMAHA!
WHO ARE YOU? HOW'D YOU GET UP HERE?
HOW'D I GET DOWN HERE'S A BETTER QUESTION! I ALMOST DIDN'T MAKE IT! I WAS FOLLOWED...
THE KIND THAT FOLLOWED ME WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANY TROUBLE, USUALLY--THEY WEREN'T MUCH TROUBLE ANYWAY--BUT IT WOULD'VE BEEN A TIDIER FIGHT IF I WEREN'T ON MY LAST LEGS!
FIGHT? YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT BURNT-OUT PATCH BACK ALONG THE TRAIL? AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN LAST LEGS? ARE YOU HURT? SICK?
YOU DON'T BACK AWAY! THAT'S GOOD!
WHO ARE YOU? HOW'D YOU KNOW MY NAME?
I WAS HOPING I'D FIND YOU HERE TODAY! I WANT TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING!
YEAH, WELL MAKE IT QUICK! WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF DAYLIGHT!
OKAY...LOOK HERE, CONNELL...AT MY EYES...

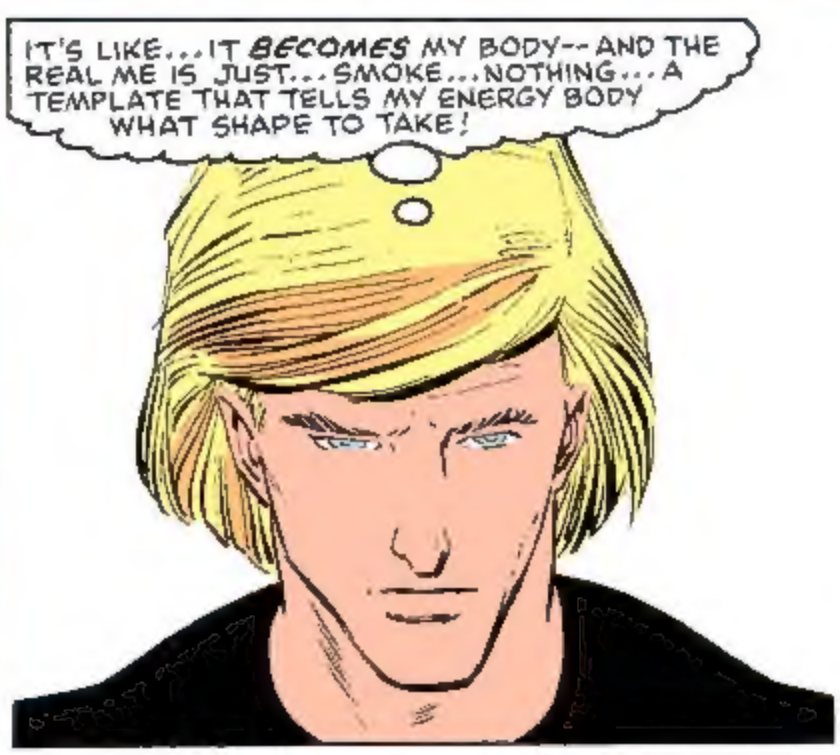

HUH...
MORNING..? WHAT AM I DOING *HERE*?
COLD... FREEZING! ALL WET... DEW...
WAS THAT A DREAM?
A PECULIAR INTER-STELLAR PHENOMENON--A BRIGHT FLASH--DREW MY ATTENTION TO THIS AREA OF SPACE! I'M GLAD IT DID!
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR SOMEONE LIKE YOU FOR A LONG TIME! BEINGS LIKE YOU--AND ME--ARE A RARE BREED!
I SUPPOSE I DIDN'T PLAN THIS VERY WELL...YOU SEE, TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR ME! I'M DYING! IF YOU WEREN'T AGREEABLE... WELL, I'M JUST GLAD YOU ARE!
THINK OF IT AS A TATTOO...
JUST PUT YOUR HAND ON IT! I'LL DO THE REST! DON'T WORRY, IF YOU DON'T WANT IT ON YOUR PALM YOU CAN *MOVE* IT LATER.
ON MY... *PALM*--?

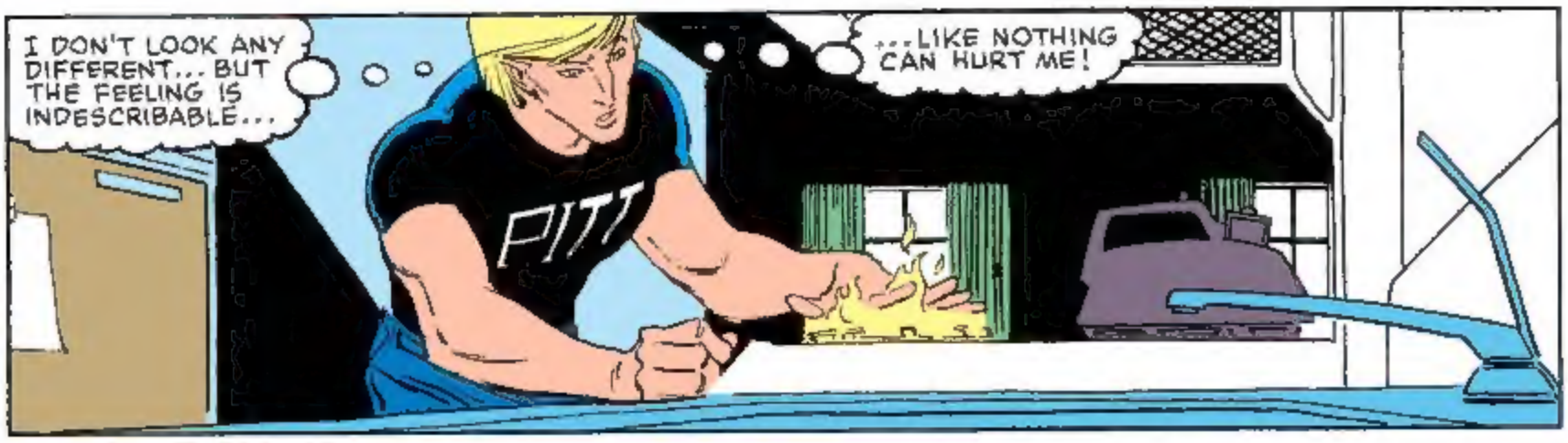

C-CAN'T RUB IT OFF! IT'S REAL...
NO! THAT'S CRAZY!
OLD MAN? OLD MAN?!
WE-- WE GOTTA TALK, MAN! WHERE ARE YOU?
TRACKS...LOOKS LIKE HE FELL...AND CRAWLED THIS WAY!
OH... NO!
OLD MAN!!
OLD M...M...
THE OLD MAN--! H-HE WASN'T EVEN HUMAN!
AND HE'S DEAD!
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING--! THAT THING ...P-PUT THIS... ON MY H-HAND..! AND N-NOW HE'S DEAD..!

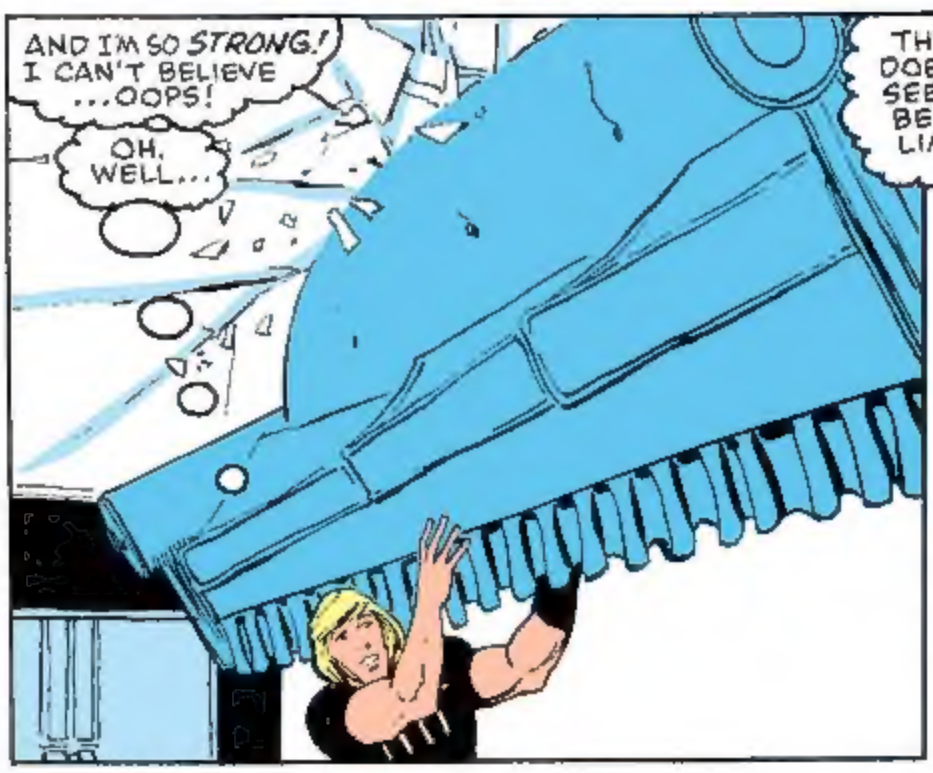

HE KNEW HE WAS DYING! THAT'S WHY HE TOLD ME ALL ABOUT IT SO CAREFULLY!
IN YOUR LANGUAGE IT WOULD BE CALLED THE "STAR BRAND"!
YOU'RE THE PERFECT CHOICE! I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW RELIEVED I AM THAT YOU ACCEPTED IT! I HOPE YOU WON'T REGRET IT LATER... TOO MUCH!
BETTER BURY HIM...
YEAH...
GO HOME... THINK...
HOURS LATER, AT THE WESTGATE VILLAGE APARTMENTS, IN A SOUTHWEST SUBURB OF PITTSBURGH...

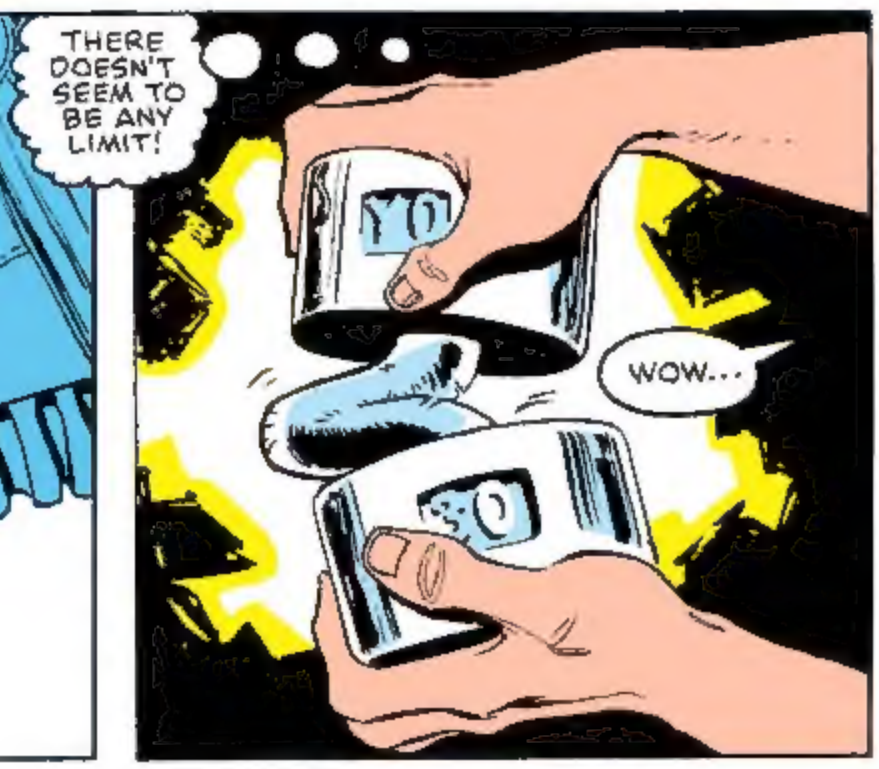



WOW...
I CAN FEEL IT! IT'S ALWAYS WARMER THAN THE REST OF MY SKIN!
AND WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT-- CONCENTRATE, LIKE NOW--THE WARMTH SPREADS! IT SORT OF FLOWS... AND FILLS UP MY WHOLE BODY!
PITT


IT'S LIKE...IT BECOMES MY BODY-- AND THE REAL ME IS JUST... SMOKE...NOTHING... A TEMPLATE THAT TELLS MY ENERGY BODY WHAT SHAPE TO TAKE!


I DON'T LOOK ANY DIFFERENT... BUT THE FEELING IS INDESCRIBABLE...
...LIKE NOTHING CAN HURT ME!
PITT


AND I'M SO STRONG! I CAN'T BELIEVE ...OOPS!
OH, WELL...

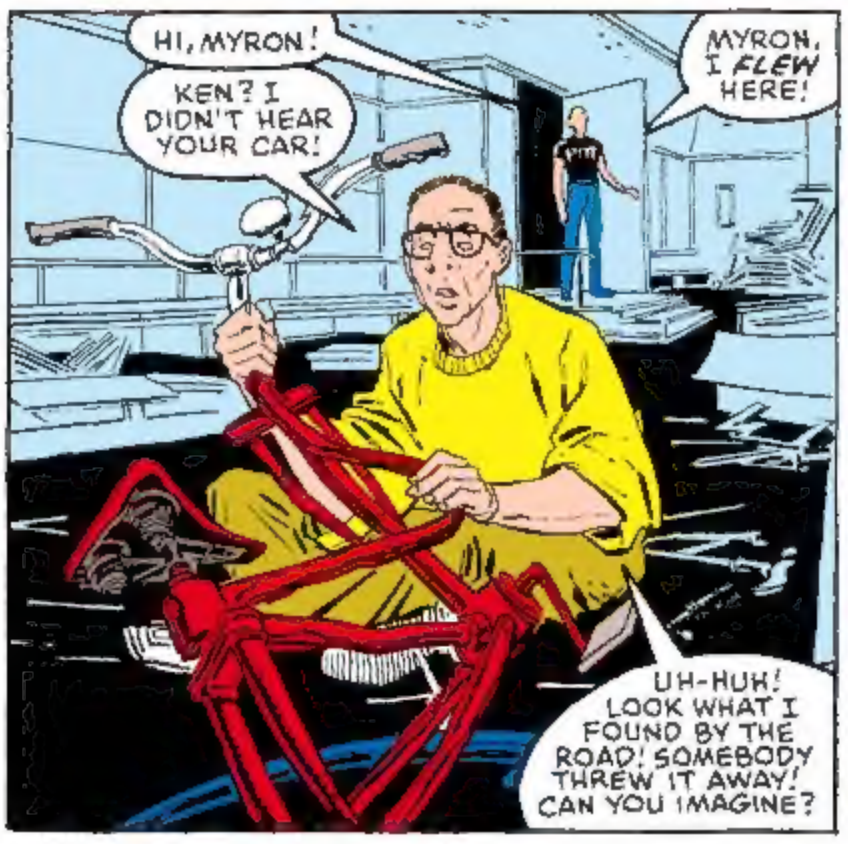

THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY LIMIT!
WOW...

THIS IS THE BEST PART! I THINK UP AND UP I GO!
PITT
IT'S AS THOUGH MY "ENERGY BODY" ISN'T SUBJECT TO GRAVITY! IT GOES WHERE I WANT AND JUST BRINGS THE FLESH AND BLOOD ALONG!

ROOM! I NEED SOME ROOM! GOOD THING IT'S DARK OUT!
PITT

IT'S EASY!

MOMENTS AND MILES LATER, IN WEST MIFFLIN...


HI, MYRON!
KEN? I DIDN'T HEAR YOUR CAR!
MYRON, I FLEW HERE!
UH-HUH! LOOK WHAT I FOUND BY THE ROAD! SOMEBODY THREW IT AWAY! CAN YOU IMAGINE?

SURE! IT'S BENT ALMOST DOUBLE! IT'S JUNK!
NONSENSE! IT JUST NEEDS A LITTLE WORK!
YOU'RE NUTS, MYRON!

I'M NUTS? YOU RE THE ONE WHO "FLEW" HERE! MAYBE YOU SHOULD LIE DOWN ON THE COUCH. .

SAVE THE THERAPIST JUNK FOR YOUR PATIENTS, MYRON! LOOK, YOU WANT THIS FRAME STRAIGHTENED? GIMME!

THERE! AND I DID FLY HERE!

MY WORD--! HOW ARE YOU DOING THAT?

SOON...

OF COURSE I BELIEVE YOU, KEN-- AT LEAST ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO! YOU CAN'T ARGUE WITH EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE! STILL, I'D LIKE TO SEE THE BODY! LET'S GO!

NOW? TONIGHT?

THIS IS IMPORTANT! MAYBE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN HISTORY!

YEAH... I KNOW! I KEEP WONDERING IF I SHOULD CALL THE POLICE OR NASA OR SOMETHING...

AFTER WE DIG UP THE EVIDENCE ...THE EVIDENCE BESIDES THE "STAR BRAND" I MEAN!

BUT... I DON'T KNOW MYRON! THINGS HE SAID KEEP COMING BACK TO ME...

YOU KNOW, I SUSPECT HE PUT YOU UNDER SOME FORM OF HYPNOSIS--A SORT OF SLEEP-TEACHING, TO ENHANCE YOUR RECALL-- SORRY, GO ON...

WELL, HE SAID IT TOOK COURAGE TO USE THE WEAPON! HE KEPT CALLING IT "THE WEAPON"! IT'S LIKE MIND OVER MATTER, YOU KNOW? I MEAN, YOU HAVE TO "THINK" IT ON, AND I GUESS THAT'D BE HARD TO DO IF YOU WERE BUSY WETTING YOUR PANTS...

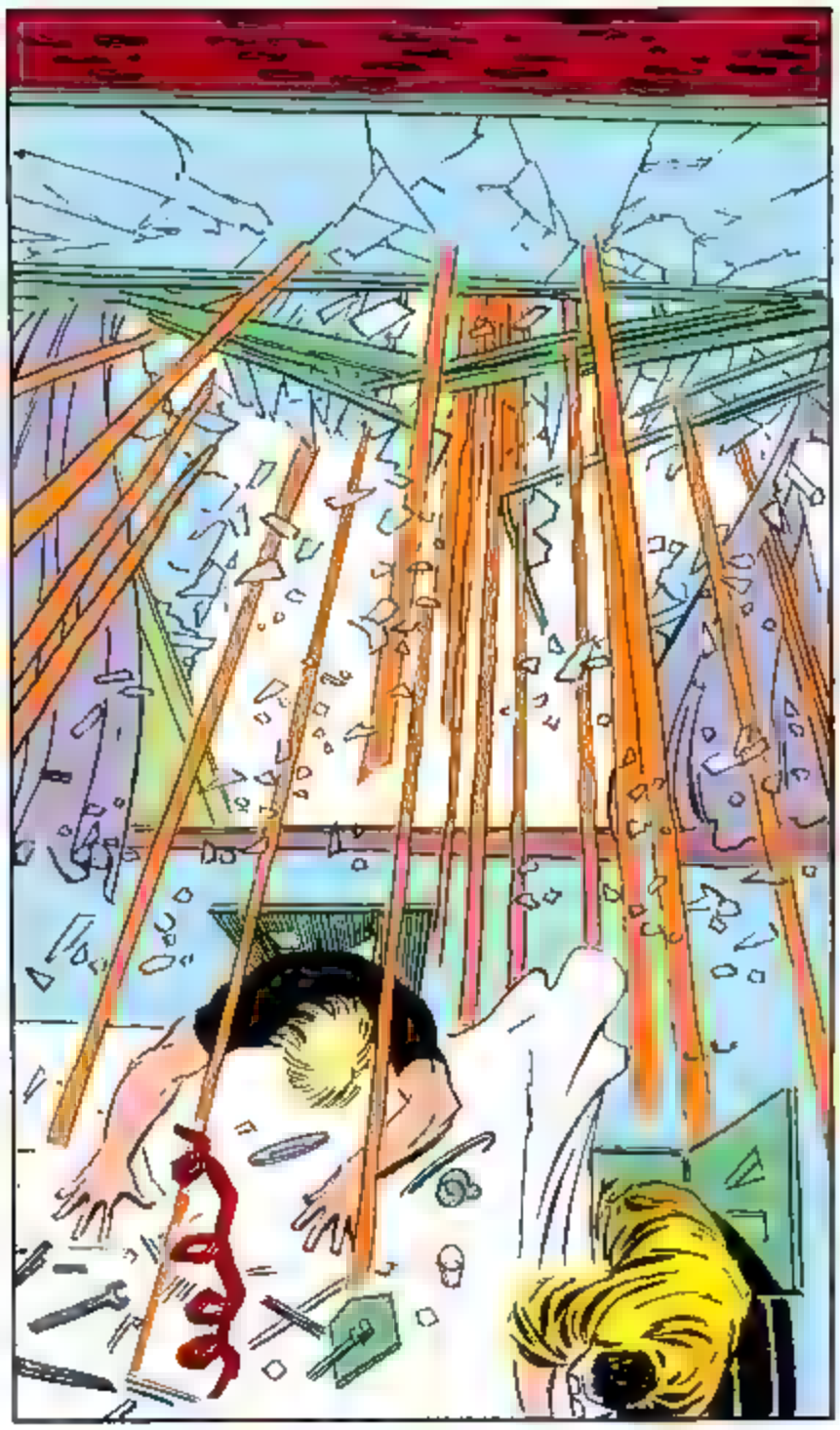
ANYWAY, SO I SAID HE SHOULD GET A LION TAMER OR AN ASTRONAUT --SOMEBODY FEARLESS...

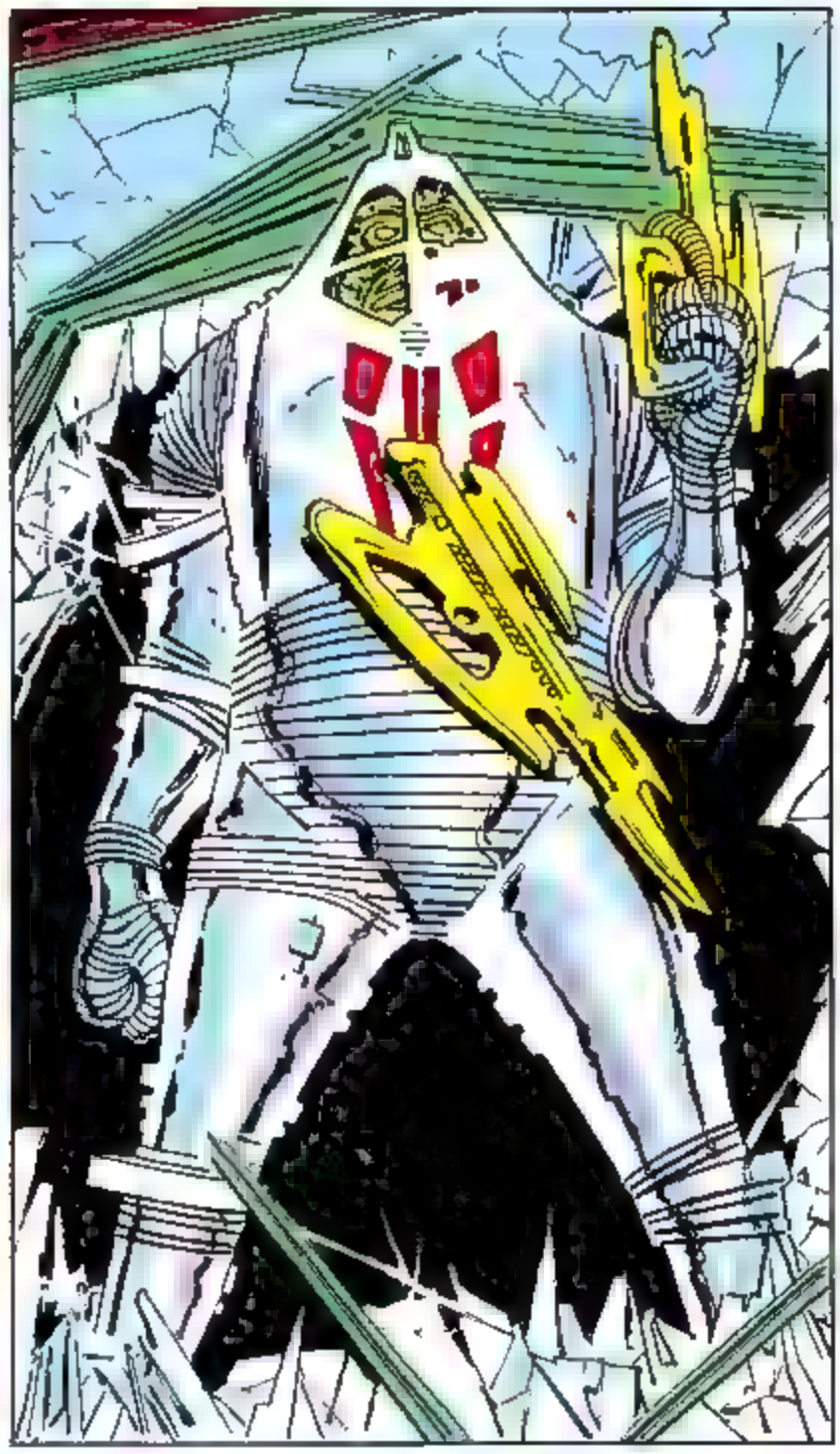
HE SAID, "FEARLESSNESS IS THE ABSENCE OF REASON! WOULD YOU PUT THE DEADLIEST WEAPON IN EXISTENCE IN THE HANDS OF A BEING CAPABLE OF ABDICATING REASON?"

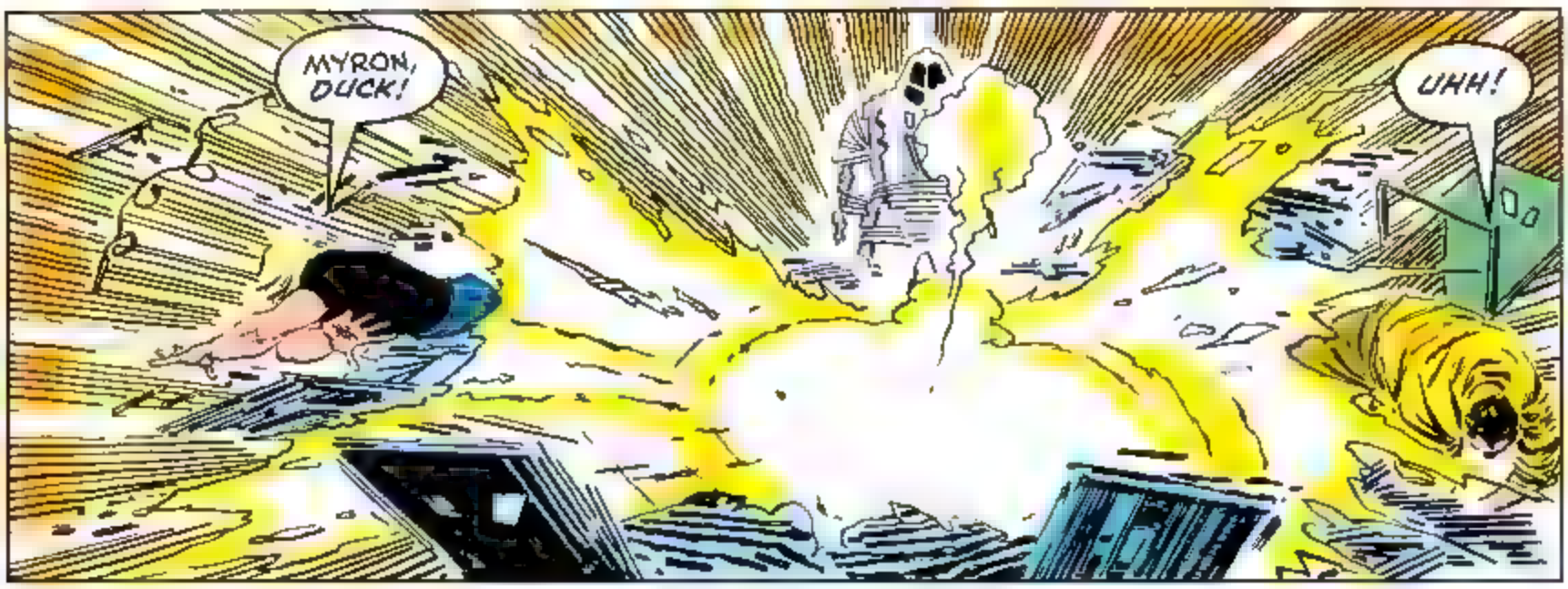
NO... I WOULDN'T! IN FACT THERE ARE LOTS OF PEOPLE I WOULDN'T TRUST WITH THIS THING! WHICH BRINGS ME TO THE POINT--MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T GO PUBLIC, YOU KNOW? PEOPLE CAN'T WANT WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT!

YOU KNOW WHAT HIS LAST WORDS TO ME WERE?

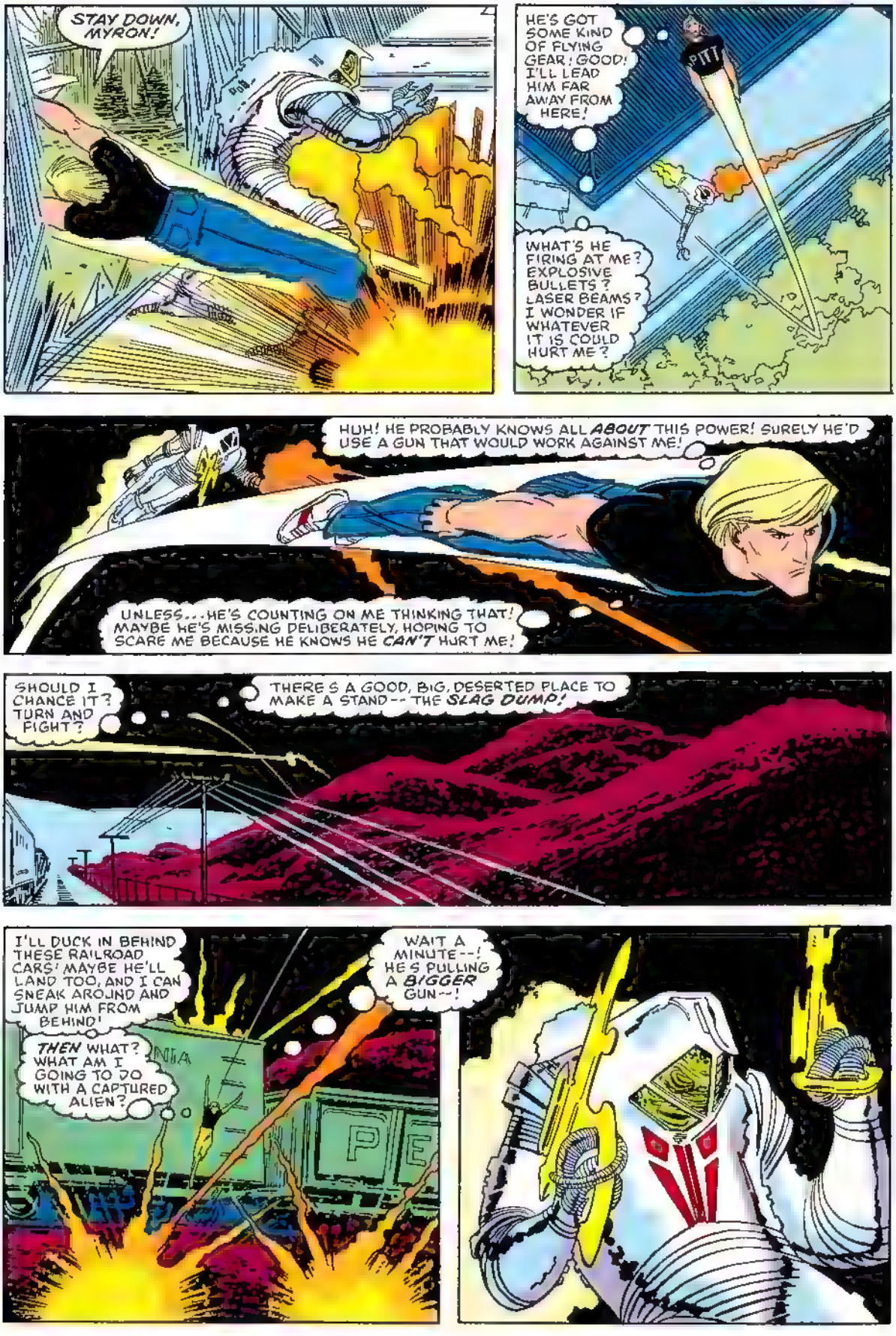
"GUARD IT WELL!"



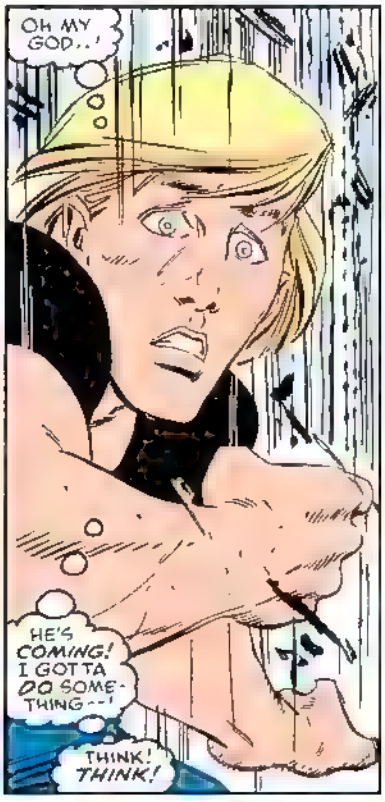


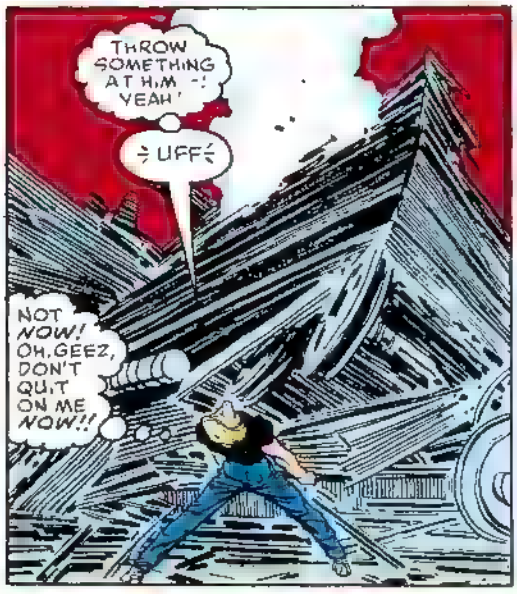

MYRON, DUCK!
UHH!

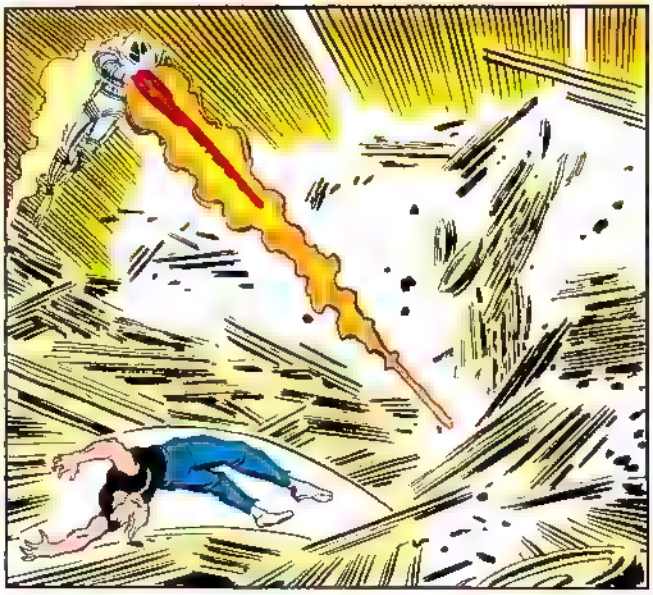
ANOTHER ALIEN--! TRYING TO KILL ME!
HE WANTS THE BRAND!

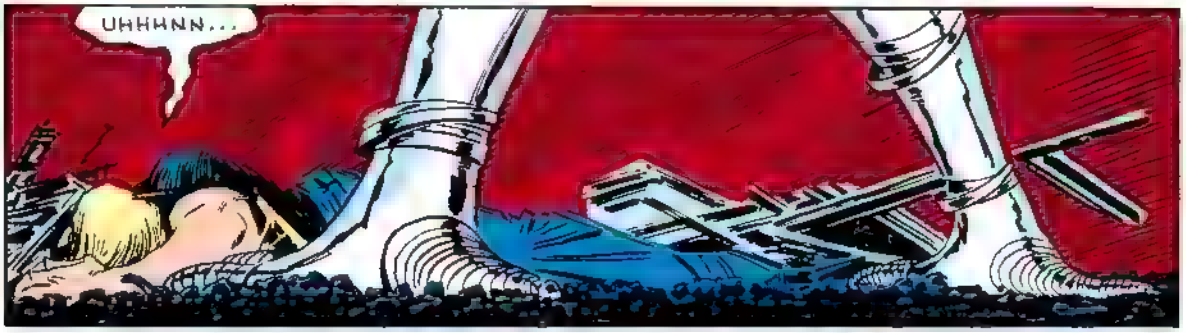

STAY DOWN, MYRON!
HE'S GOT SOME KIND OF FLYING GEAR! GOOD! I'LL LEAD HIM FAR AWAY FROM HERE!
WHAT'S HE FIRING AT ME? EXPLOSIVE BULLETS? LASER BEAMS? I WONDER IF WHATEVER IT IS COULD HURT ME?
HUH! HE PROBABLY KNOWS ALL *ABOUT* THIS POWER! SURELY HE'D USE A GUN THAT WOULD WORK AGAINST ME!
UNLESS... HE'S COUNTING ON ME THINKING THAT! MAYBE HE'S MISSING DELIBERATELY, HOPING TO SCARE ME BECAUSE HE KNOWS HE *CAN'T* HURT ME!
SHOULD I CHANCE IT? TURN AND FIGHT?
THERE'S A GOOD, BIG, DESERTED PLACE TO MAKE A STAND -- THE *SLAG DUMP!*
I'LL DUCK IN BEHIND THESE RAILROAD CARS! MAYBE HE'LL LAND TOO, AND I CAN SNEAK AROUND AND JUMP HIM FROM BEHIND!
THEN WHAT? WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH A CAPTURED ALIEN?
WAIT A MINUTE--! HE'S PULLING A *BIGGER* GUN--!

MY GOD


OH MY GOD..!
HE'S COMING! I GOTTA DO SOMETHING--!
THINK! THINK!

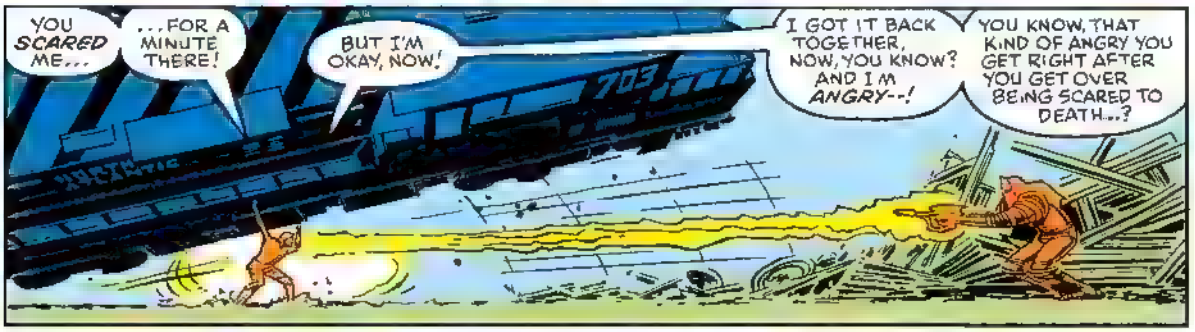

THROW SOMETHING AT HIM -! YEAH!
≑UFF≑
NOT NOW! OH,GEEZ, DON'T QUIT ON ME NOW!!

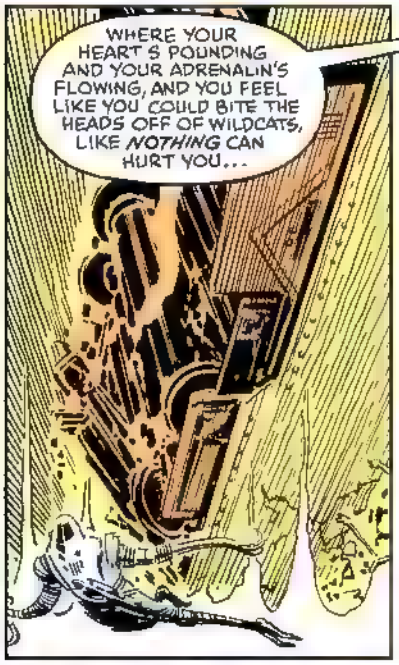


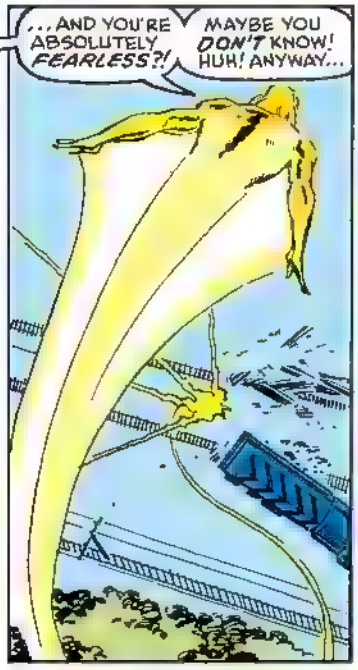

UHHHNN...

SURRENDER THE WEAPON!
C-CAN'T... MMF...
LISTEN TO ME! LISTEN TO THE TRUTH...
THE OLD MAN DECEIVED YOU HE WAS NOT DYING. HE IS NOT DEAD!
YOU HAVE BEEN DUPED NTO PLAYING A ROLE IN AN INTRIGUE YOU CANNOT BEGIN TO COMPREHEND-- A ROLE THAT WILL BRING PAIN, SUFFERING, AND DEATH TO YOU...
...AND UNIVERSAL DOMINATION TO THE OLD MAN AND HIS ILK.
UNLESS...YOU GIVE ME THE WEAPON!
DO NOT FORCE ME TO TERMINATE YOU!
GIVE IT TO ME! LET IT GO! YOU ARE WEAK! I AM STRONG! I SHALL PROTECT IT! I SHALL USE IT TO PROTECT THE UNIVERSE! I AM THE PERFECT ONE TO POSSESS THE POWER OF THE WEAPON!
BUT... THE OLD MAN SAID I WAS...
SO TIRED! GIVE IT UP?
NO
BUT... HE'S PULLING IT AWAY!
FIGHT BACK! FIGHT BACK! HOLD ON TO IT! DON'T WANT TO LOSE IT! LONG WALK HOME ..
WHAT AM I THINKING--? HE'S GOING TO KILL ME! BETTER LET IT GO! LET IT GO! GIVE UP! GIVE UP!
NO!

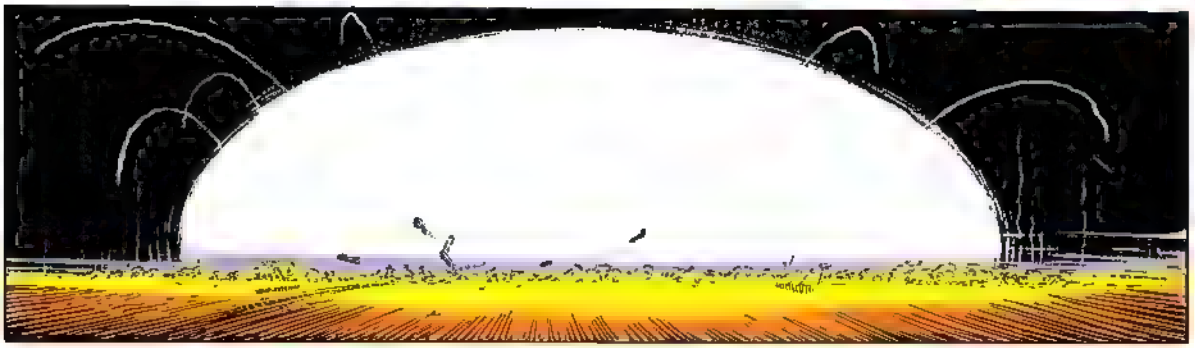
NO WAY!


YOU SCARED ME...
...FOR A MINUTE THERE!
BUT I'M OKAY, NOW!
I GOT IT BACK TOGETHER, NOW, YOU KNOW? AND I'M ANGRY--!
YOU KNOW, THAT KIND OF ANGRY YOU GET RIGHT AFTER YOU GET OVER BEING SCARED TO DEATH...?


WHERE YOUR HEART'S POUNDING AND YOUR ADRENALIN'S FLOWING, AND YOU FEEL LIKE YOU COULD BITE THE HEADS OFF OF WILDCATS, LIKE NOTHING CAN HURT YOU...


...AND YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY FEARLESS?!
MAYBE YOU DON'T KNOW! HUH! ANYWAY...

YOU WANT THIS POWER, JERK--?
WELL, EAT IT!



KEN? YOU OKAY? WHAT *HAPPENED*? IT LOOKED LIKE AN ATOM BOMB EXPLODED!

I DON'T KNOW... I GOT SO WORKED UP MY ENERGY SELF JUST SEEMED TO FLOW OUT BEYOND THE BOUNDS OF MY BODY... SORT OF WENT NOVA... OR SOMETHING..

I M NOT SURE I FOLLOW... BUT... YOUR CLOTHES .?

BURNED OFF, I GUESS! NO GREAT LOSS! AT ONE POINT WHEN THAT THING GRABBED ME, I... UH... WET MY PANTS!

NINETY MINUTES LATER, IN WHITEHALL...

EXPLOSION OF THE WEST MIFFLIN SLAG DUMP HAS AUTHORITIES BAFFLED! POLICE HAVE SEALED THE AREA OFF, BUT ARE CALLING SPECULATIONS THAT THE BLAST WAS A SMALL NUCLEAR BOMB "RIDICULOUS"...

NOK NOK

HM! DOOR.

HIYA DUCK. QUACK.

KENNY: QUACK, YOURSELF!

WHAT'CHA DOIN' IN THOSE FUNNY CLOTHES? THEY LOOK LIKE...

MYRON'S! YEAH' THEY DON'T FIT HIM EITHER YOU CAN T ALWAYS FIND THE SIZES YOU WANT IN THE TRASH'

WHAT HAPPENED TO *YOUR* CLOTHES?

I SORT OF *LOST* THEM.. AND MY WALLET, AND MY KEYS! IT'S A LONG STORY DEB'I, UH... NEED A PLACE TO STAY TONIGHT! OKAY?

SURE!

THANKS! GOOD OL DEBBIE TH DUCK. . MY FAVOR.TE WATERFOWL...

QUACK QUACK!

YOJ LOOK COLD. HERE WRAP YOURSELF N THIS BLANKET WHILE I MAKE YOJ... SOME... SOUP.

KENNY!

POOR BABY!

NEXT MORNING, AT WESTGATE VILLAGE . .

DON'TCHA WORRY, KENNY! AS SOON AS I GET TO WORK, I'LL CALL JOHN EBERHARDT AND TELL 'IM YOU CAN'T MAKE IT IN TODAY!

THANKS FOR EVERYTHING DUCK!

LOCK 24H

QUACK!

GOOD OLD DEB! NEXT PAYDAY, I GOTTA REMEMBER TO GIVE HER BACK THE BUCKS SHE LOANED ME TO PAY THE LOCKSMITH! MAYBE I'LL TAKE HER OUT TO DINNER OR SOMETHING, TOO!

THAT REMINDS ME - I'VE GOT A DATE WITH *BARB* TONIGHT!

SHOOT! I HAVE TO GET A NEW DRIVER'S LICENSE ...AND VISA CARD! GOOD THING I HAVE A SPARE SET OF KEYS!

LATER, JUST OFF A DESERTED BACKROAD IN THE LAUREL MOUNTAINS . .

NO ONE'S AROUND TO SEE ME! I GUESS IT'S SAFE TO FLY THE REST OF THE WAY!

BIG JOHN'S GOING TO BE MIFFED AT ME FOR TAKING THE DAY OFF...

...BUT THERE'S SOMETHING I CAN'T WAIT TO FIND OUT!

GONE! THE OLD MAN'S GONE!

THE OTHER ALIEN WAS TELLING THE TRUTH! THE ALIEN I *INCINERATED!*

WHAT'S THAT ON THE FLOOR? CLOTHES?

NOT THE OLD MAN'S...LOOKS LIKE MY SIZE!

HMP! A FAREWELL PRESENT.?"SO LONG SUCKER!"

MY GOD...WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?

LATER, AT THE APARTMENT OF BARBARA PETROVIC. .

IS SOMETHING WRONG, KEN? YOU'RE SO QUIET!

HM? OH...NO, BARB... I'M JUST A LITTLE TIRED!

MOMMY, MAY WE WATCH *SCARECROW AND MRS. KING*?

NOT TONIGHT, LAURIE, DEAR! TIME FOR YOU AND BOBBY TO GO TO BED!

GOOD NIGHT, MOMMY! GOOD N.GHT, KEN!

BRUSH YOUR TEETH! AND FLOSS!

SLEEP TIGHT, MUNCHKINS!

ALONE AT LAST!

SO... ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND--? OR AM I GOING TO HAVE TO GIVE YOU A LICKING?

CERTAINLY! BUT FIRST, I WROTE A POEM TODAY! WANT TO HEAR IT?

ROSES ARE RED, TELEPHONES ARE PLASTIC, DISCO IS DEAD, BUT YOU ARE FANTASTIC!

YOU'RE *SUCH* A ROMANTIC!

YOU KNOW, DINNER WAS GREAT! HOW DO YOU DO IT, BARB? PERFECT HOME, PERFECT KIDS, PERFECT EVERYTHING-- AND YOU RE PERFECTLY BEAUTIFUL!

AND I'M ALL YOURS! SO IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT, NOW YOU KNOW IT'S SAFE TO ASK ME TO MARRY YOU!

BARB, I... I DON'T TH.NK THAT ..

FORGET I SAID THAT! PRETEND I DIDN'T SAY THAT! I'M SORRY! THE LAST THING I WANT TO GET INTO TONIGHT IS A HEAVY DISCUSSION ABOUT OUR FUTURE!

NOW WHERE WERE WE? AH YES! ON THE VERGE OF SOME NECKING...

LIKE CRAZED WEASELS!

HEY. D D YOU HEAR SOMETHING? UPSTA.RS?

WHAT WAS *THAT*?! OUTSIDE! IT SOUNDED LIKE... SOMETHING DROPPED FROM AN UPSTAIRS WINDOW! LOOK! DID YOU SEE SOMETHING MOVE OUTSIDE?

KEN, *RELAX!*

I'D BETTER TAKE A LOOK!

KEN, *HONESTLY* -!

LAURIE-- WHERE *ARE* YOU?!

THE WINDOW'S WIDE OPEN.

WHAT?!

LAURE--! WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT OF BED? WHAT IS THAT-- THAT *GUN?*

HUH?

GIVE ME THAT!

KEN, PLEASE IT'S JUST ONE OF BOBBY'S TOYS.

NO IT'S *NOT!* YOU NEVER BUY BOBBY TOY GUNS

MAYBE HE BORROWED IT FROM A FRIEND WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

LAURE? HONEY? I THINK SHE'S *SLEEP-WALKING!*

NO SHE'S NOT! BUT I KNOW WHO DID THIS TO HER! HE'S NOT GOING TO GET AWAY W[illegible]

I THOUGHT HE WAS *DEAD!* BUT HE ISN'T! HE'S *ALIVE!*

KEN--!

KEN?!

WHERE IS HE? WHERE IS HE?!
HOURS LATER, AT KEN'S APARTMENT
HELLO... MYRON! YEAH, I JUST GOT IN...I WAS AT BARB'S, THEN I WAS OUT LOOKING FOR THAT THING THAT ATTACKED US LAST NIGHT... NO, HE'S NOT DEAD! I THOUGHT I SAW H.M. SORT OF FADE AWAY BEFORE I... YOU KNOW!
YES, I'M WORRIED, MYRON, I--IT TRIED TO USE BARB'S LITTLE GIRL TO GET AT ME! IT MUST'VE DRUGGED HER OR HYPNOTIZED HER, I--I DON'T DARE TURN MY BACK ON ANYONE! I CAN'T GO TO SLEEP--! WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?
I HATE TO WORRY YOU MORE BUT I FIGURED I'D BETTER TELL YOU THAT FBI MEN HAVE BEEN GOING DOOR TO DOOR AROUND HERE ASKING QUESTIONS! THEY WERE VERY CURIOUS ABOUT THE BROKEN WINDOWS AND OTHER DAMAGE...
OF COURSE I DIDN'T TELL THEM ANYTHING--! I'M EVEN CALLING FROM A PAY PHONE IN CASE MY LINE IS TAPPED!
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THIS WHOLE THING AND I'M REALLY GETTING CONCERNED KEN--! ABOUT YOUR SAFETY AND ABOUT THE EFFECT THIS BUSINESS COULD HAVE ON THE WHOLE WORLD!
60
JONE
WE'LL TALK MORE TOMORROW! TILL THEN DON'T DO ANYTHING, OKAY?
KENNY? YOU ALONE?
TAP TAP
YEAH.
I'VE BEEN TRYIN' TO CALL YOU ALL DAY! I JUST CAME TO LEAVE A NOTE ON YOUR DOOR!
WHEN I CALLED JOHN EBERHARDT THIS MORNING, HE SAID IF YOU DINT COME TO WORK TOMORROW YOU SHOONT COME IN EVER AGAIN!
GREAT..
WHAT'S WRONG, KENNY? IS IT.. SOMETHING WITH... BARB?
NO...BUT I PROBABLY SCREWED THAT UP, TOO!
I WISH I COULD MAKE WHATEVER IT IS ALL BETTER! HEY, YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE ME, Y'KNOW!

I'LL BE ALL RIGHT, DUCK!

QUACK! HEY, WHAT'S THIS?

DON'T TOUCH THAT! WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO?!

OWW!

YOU KNOCKED THE BREATH OUTTA ME--! LOOK, I'M *SORRY* IF...

HE'S DOING IT TO ME *AGAIN!* MAKING ME AFRAID! TYING MY INSIDES UP IN KNOTS!

KENNY, I DINT MEAN TO...

SHH! DEBBIEDUCK, IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW! *I'M* ALL RIGHT NOW! YOU MADE ME REALIZE SOMETHING IMPORTANT!

I'M SORRY IF I HURT YOU! I'LL MAKE IT UP TO YOU! I SWEAR!

YOU'D BETTER GO NOW!

YOU SURE EVERYTHIN'S OKAY? YOU'RE NOT MAD AT ME OR NOTHIN'..?

DUCK, YOU JUST HELPED ME MORE THAN I CAN TELL YOU! THANKS! I *LOVE* YOU, BABE!

BUT...

TRUST ME! EVERYTHING'S FINE, NOW! GOOD NIGHT!

YEP! *FINE!*

THE NEXT MORNING, AT McMULLEN AND ZAYRE VW IN DORMONT, IN THE BASEMENT USED CAR RECONDITIONING SHOP...

QUITTING TIME, KEN! MAN, YOU BUSTED HUMP TODAY! YOU MUST LIKE THIS JOB!

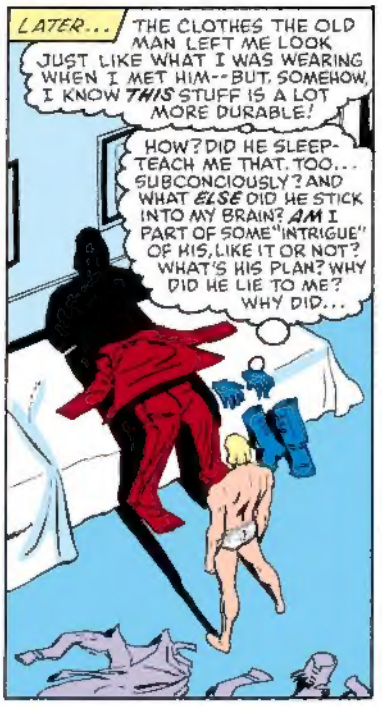
I JUST LIKE BEING AROUND YOU, JOHN! YOU'RE OKAY FOR A FAT GUY!

YEAH? WELL HOW ABOUT RUNNING YOUR SKINNY BUTT UP TO THE ROOF LOT AND BRINGING MY CAR DOWN? I'D DO IT MY OWN SELF, BUT THEM STAIRS IS HARD ON US FAT GUYS!

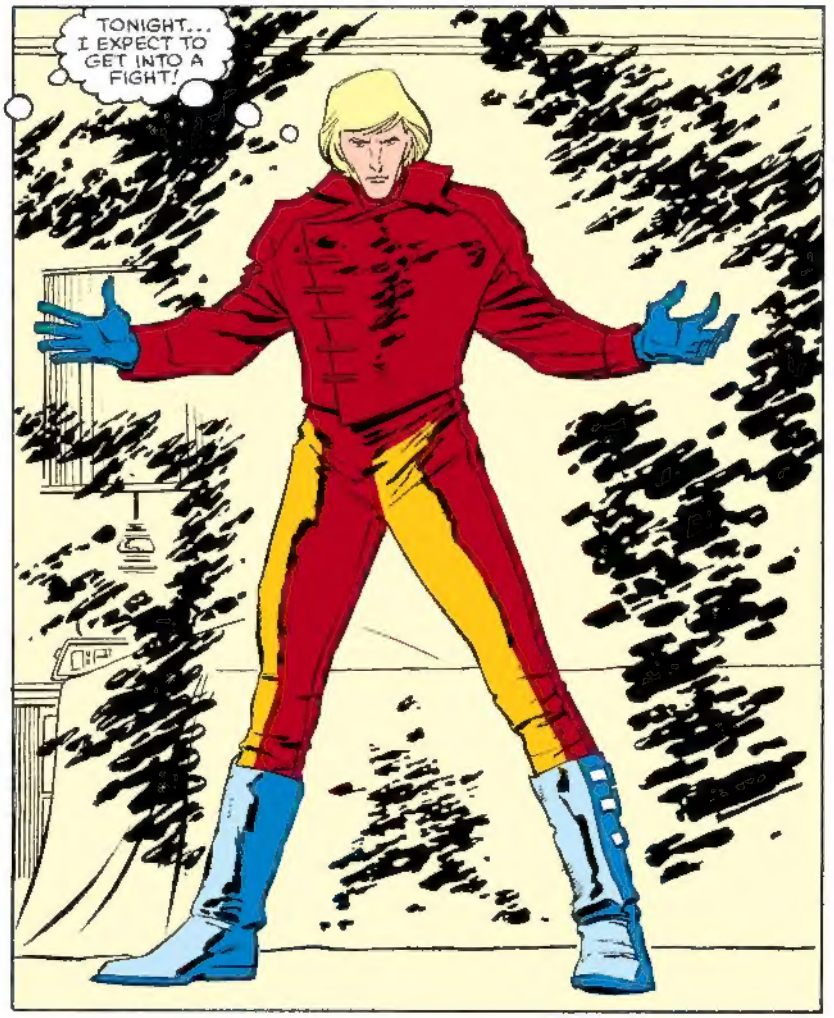
ON MY WAY!

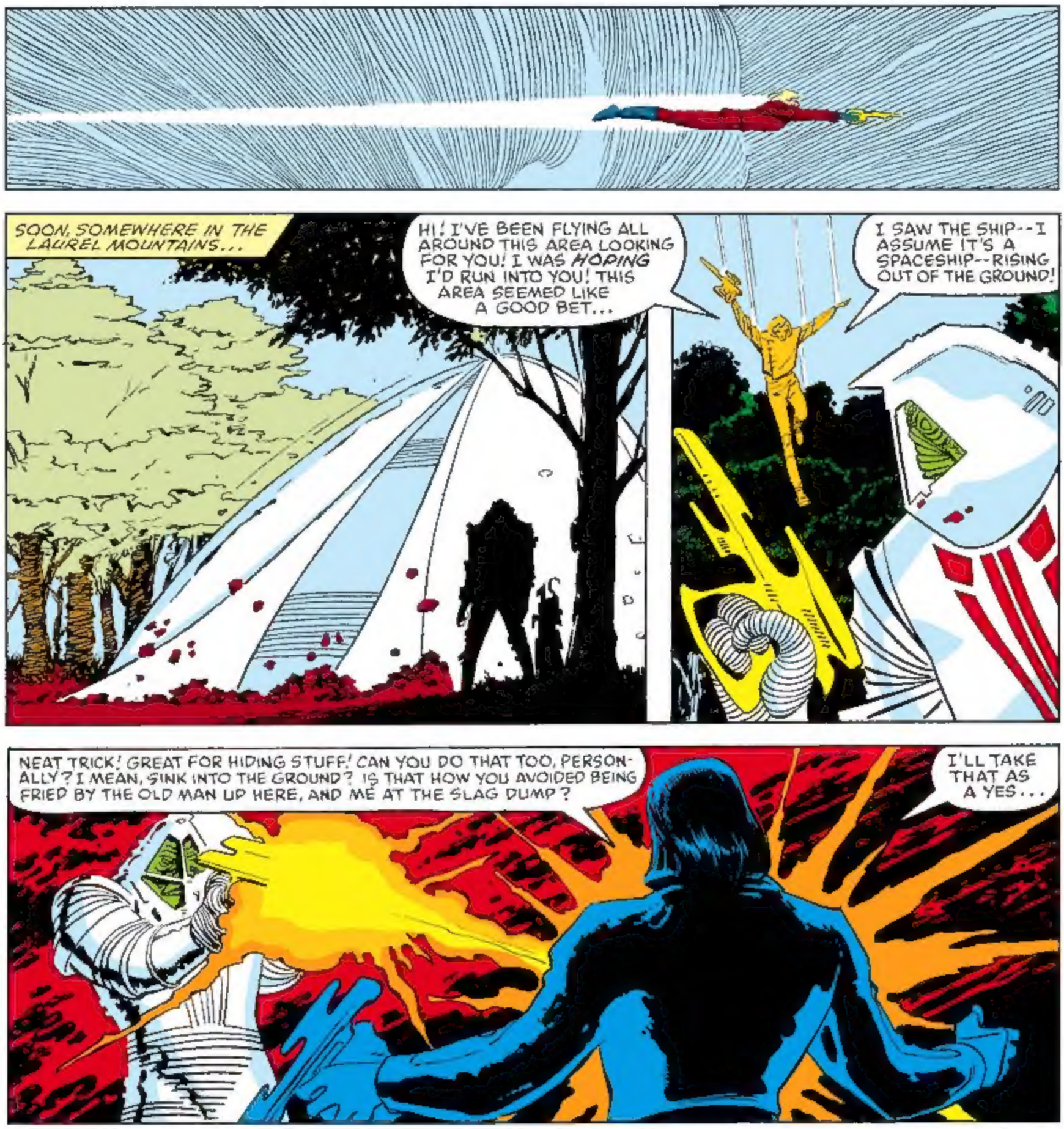
WELL, I'LL BE--! THERE'S MY CAR! I DIDN'T EVEN HEAR KENNY PULL UP!
MAMMEN ZAYRE

HEY, WAIT A MINUTE--! I NEVER GAVE HIM THE KEYS! THE DOORS ARE STILL LOCKED... AND THE ENGINE'S STILL COLD! HOW THE DEVIL...?

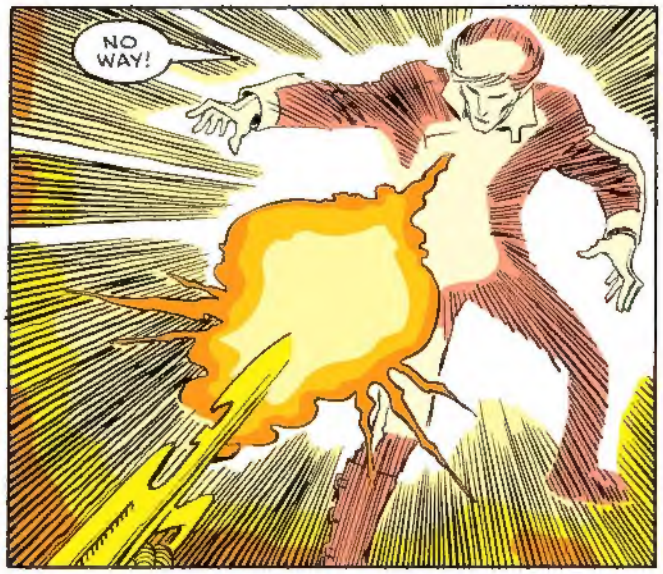

LATER...
THE CLOTHES THE OLD MAN LEFT ME LOOK JUST LIKE WHAT I WAS WEARING WHEN I MET HIM--BUT, SOMEHOW, I KNOW THIS STUFF IS A LOT MORE DURABLE!
HOW? DID HE SLEEP-TEACH ME THAT, TOO... SUBCONCIOUSLY? AND WHAT ELSE DID HE STICK INTO MY BRAIN? AM I PART OF SOME "INTRIGUE" OF HIS, LIKE IT OR NOT? WHAT'S HIS PLAN? WHY DID HE LIE TO ME? WHY DID...

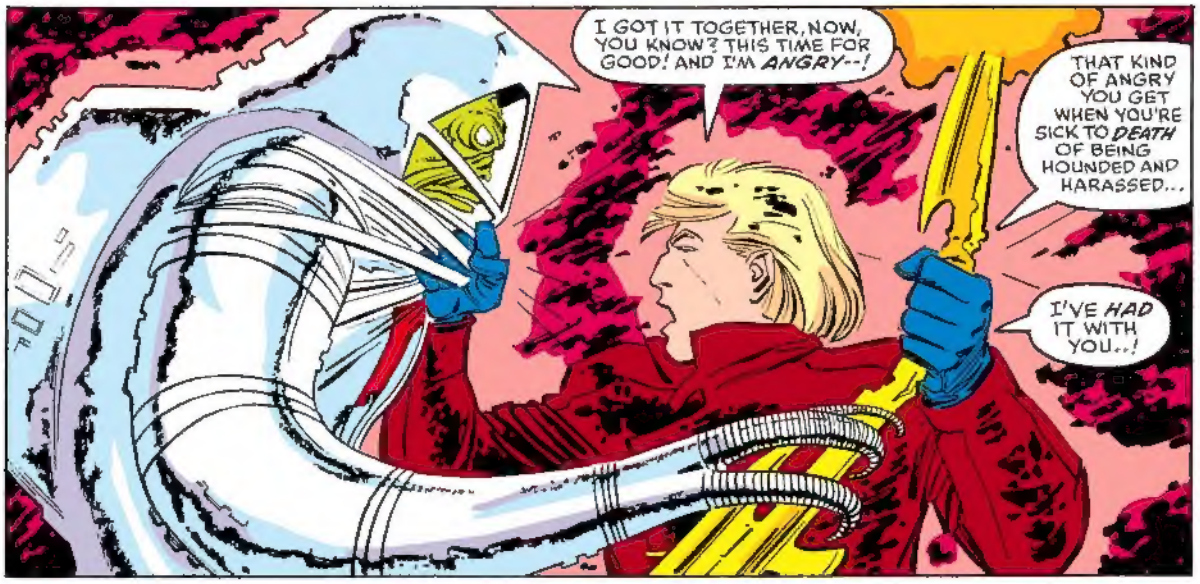
FORGET IT! WHO KNOWS... WHO CARES? I'LL THINK ABOUT IT LATER! I KNOW WHAT I'VE GOT TO DO FOR NOW!
MAKES SENSE TO WEAR THESE CLOTHES IF I EXPECT TO GET INTO A FIGHT...


TONIGHT... I EXPECT TO GET INTO A FIGHT!

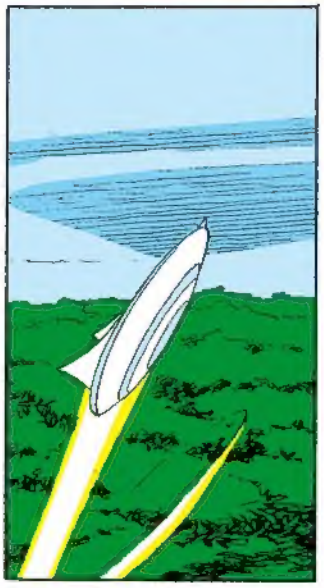

SOON, SOMEWHERE IN THE LAUREL MOUNTAINS...
HI! I'VE BEEN FLYING ALL AROUND THIS AREA LOOKING FOR YOU! I WAS HOPING I'D RUN INTO YOU! THIS AREA SEEMED LIKE A GOOD BET...
I SAW THE SHIP--I ASSUME IT'S A SPACESHIP--RISING OUT OF THE GROUND!
NEAT TRICK! GREAT FOR HIDING STUFF! CAN YOU DO THAT TOO, PERSONALLY? I MEAN, SINK INTO THE GROUND? IS THAT HOW YOU AVOIDED BEING FRIED BY THE OLD MAN UP HERE, AND ME AT THE SLAG DUMP?
I'LL TAKE THAT AS A YES...
I BROUGHT YOUR GUN BACK! HERE...
OOPS!

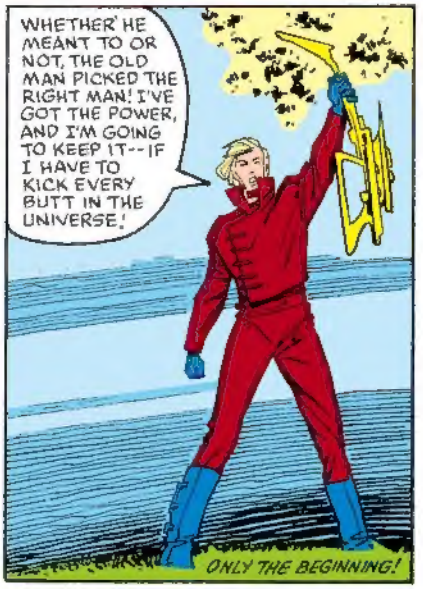
HOW DO YOU DO THAT SINKING INTO THE GROUND STUFF? MAYBE YOU SHOULD DO IT *NOW*, HUH?
BUT... NAH, NOW THAT I'M ONTO YOU, YOU *KNOW* I'D FIND A WAY TO COME AFTER YOU! DON'T YOU?
MORE GUNS? WON'T HELP...


NO WAY!


I GOT IT TOGETHER, NOW, YOU KNOW? THIS TIME FOR GOOD! AND I'M *ANGRY*--!
THAT KIND OF ANGRY YOU GET WHEN YOU'RE SICK TO *DEATH* OF BEING HOUNDED AND HARASSED...
I'VE *HAD* IT WITH YOU..!

GET OFF OF MY PLANET!




WHETHER HE MEANT TO OR NOT, THE OLD MAN PICKED THE RIGHT MAN! I'VE GOT THE POWER, AND I'M GOING TO KEEP IT--IF I HAVE TO KICK EVERY BUTT IN THE UNIVERSE!
ONLY THE BEGINNING!